

The Correct Islaamic 'Aqeedah And That Which Opposes It

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Prologue

In the Name of Allaah the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

All praise is for Allaah alone, and prayers and peace be upon the Prophet, his family and his Companions.

To Proceed:

The correct 'Aqeedah[1] is the foundation of Islaam and the foundation stone of the Islaamic nation. It is known through evidences of the Sharee'ah[2] from the Book[3] and the Sunnah[4], that one's actions and statements can only be correct and acceptable to Allaah when they arise from a correct 'Aqeedah. If, however, the 'Aqeedah is not correct then the actions and statements that arise due to it are invalid. Allaah the Exalted says,

"Whosoever rejects faith, then fruitless is his work and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers."[5]

"And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] as it was to those before you [saying]: 'If you join others in worship with Allaah [then] surely [all] your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be amongst the losers.'"[6]

There are many verses with this meaning.

The evidences in the clear Book of Allaah and in the Sunnah of His truthful Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam show the correct 'Aqeedah in brief, to be: eemaan[7] in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and Predestination - the good and the bad of it. These six matters are the fundamentals of the correct 'Aqeedah with which Allaah the Almighty revealed His Book and sent His Messenger Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

All issues concerning the unseen and all that we have been informed of are from Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. These issues all stem from the above principles and we are obliged to believe in them. The evidence for these six pillars [of Faith] are in the Qur`aan and the Sunnah and are many. These include the sayings of Allaah,

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West [in prayers] but righteous is he who believes in Allaah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets."[8]

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord, as do the faithful believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. They say: We make no distinction between one and another of His Messengers."[9]

"O you who believe! Believe in Allaah, His Messenger [Muhammad], the Book [the Qur`aan] which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before [him]. Whosoever disbelieves in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day has strayed far away."[10]

"Do you not know that Allaah knows all that is in heaven and the earth? Verily it is [all] in a record. Verily, that is easy for Allaah."[11]

There are also many authentic ahaadeeth[12] proving these fundamentals. Amongst them is the famous authentic hadeeth narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh on the authority of the leader of the believers, 'Umar bin al-Khattaab, may Allaah be pleased with him, that [the Angel] Jibreel 'alayhis salaam asked the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam about eemaan [Faith]. He replied to him, "Eemaan is to believe in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and to believe in Predestination - the good and bad of it."[13]

All the crucial and obligatory matters of belief relating to Allaah, the Day of Judgement and other matters of the Unseen originate from these six principles.

Eemaan in Allaah

- Belief in Allaah, the One free from defect, includes believing that He is the [only] true deity deserving worship, as opposed to anything else that is worshipped. This is because He is the sole Creator of the slaves, the Granter of kindness and goodness to them, the One who takes charge of their provision and He is fully aware of both their secrets and that which they openly manifest. He is the One who rewards those who obey Him and punishes those who disobey Him. It is for this worship that Allaah created the humans and the Jinn[14] and He commanded them with it. He the Exalted says,

"And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [Alone]. I seek no sustenance from them, nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Verily Allaah is the Provider, Lord of Power, the Strong."[15]

"O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become pious. (The One) Who has made the earth a resting place for you and the sky as a canopy, and sent down rain from the sky and brought forth fruits therewith as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allaah while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]." [16]

Indeed, Allaah sent the Messengers and He revealed the Books in order to explain this reality [of worshipping Allaah alone], to call to it and to warn against that which opposes it. He, the One free from defect says,

"And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger [proclaiming]: Worship Allaah [Alone] and avoid Taaghoot."[17,18]

"And We did not send any messenger before you [O Muhammad] except that We inspired him [saying]: Laa ilaaha illaa Ana (There is none who has the right to be worshipped but I [Allaah]). So worship Me [Alone and none else]!"[19]

"[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected [in every sphere of knowledge, etc] and then explained in detail by One [Allaah] Who is All-Wise and Well Acquainted [with all things]. [It says] worship none but Allaah. Verily, I [Muhammad] am unto you one who warns and brings Glad Tidings from Him."[20]

The reality and essence of this worship is to single out Allaah, the One free from defect, in all of the actions of worship that are performed by the servant. These acts include supplication, reverential fear, hope, prayers, fasting, sacrifice, making vows, and other than these from all the different types of worship, by way of submission, humility, fervent desire, awe and dread, along with complete love for Him and humility before His Greatness.

Most of the Noble Qur`aan was sent down for this great principle. Allaah the Most High says,

"So worship Allaah by doing religious deeds sincerely for His Sake alone, not showing off and not setting up rivals with Him in worship. Surely the religion [i.e. worship and obedience] is for Allaah only."[21] "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him."[22] "So worship Allaah, making the religion purely for Him, even though the unbelievers hate it."[23]

In the two Saheehs[24] on the authority of Mu`aadh, may Allaah be pleased with him, who said that the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said,

"Allaah's right over the people is that they worship Him alone and do not associate any partners with Him."

- Belief in Allaah also includes the belief in all that He has made obligatory upon His slaves such as the five pillars of Islaam. The five pillars are: Testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is the Messenger of Allaah; establishing the prayer (Salaah); giving the charity (Zakaah); fasting in Ramadaan; performing the Hajj to the House of Allaah for those who are able: and the other obligations that come in the pure Sharee'ah.

The most important and greatest pillar is the testification that none is worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam is the Messenger of Allaah.

Testifying to Laa ilaaha ill Allaah necessitates sincere and sole worship of Allaah Alone, negating the worship of anything else. Therefore, the meaning [of Laa ilaaha ill Allaah] is that there is nothing that deserves to be worshipped except Allaah. Hence whatever is worshipped besides Allaah, whether it is a man, an angel, a jinn, or anything else is false and invalid. Indeed, the One Who truly and rightfully deserves to be worshipped is Allaah alone. He says,

"That is because Allaah - He is the Truth [the only True God of all that exists, Who has no partners or rivals with Him], and what they [the polytheists] invoke besides Him is falsehood." [25]

It has been mentioned previously that Allaah the Exalted created the jinn and humans for this great purpose [of worshipping Allaah alone]. It for this reason that He sent His Messengers and revealed His Books. So consider this carefully and reflect upon it often so that it may become clear to you; and that you may realise [the fallacy] that many Muslims have fallen into due to their great ignorance with regards to this principle - to the point that they worship others besides Allaah! They have given others the rights particular to Allaah - and Allaah is the Source of Help!

- Belief in Allaah also includes the belief that He is the sole Creator of the universe, the One who Regulates and Governs the affairs of His creation in accordance with His Knowledge and Power, as and how He Wills. He is the Master of the World and the Hereafter and the Lord of the entire universe. There is no creator other than Him, and there is no lord except Him. None shares with Him in any of these qualities.

- [This belief further includes knowing that] He sent the Messengers and revealed the Books in order to correct and purify the slaves, to call them to that which would

correct them and bestow upon them victory in this life and in the Hereafter. He the Most High says,

"Allaah is the Creator of all things and He is the Wakeel (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc) of all things."[26]

"Indeed, your Lord is Allaah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He Istawaa` (rose above) the Throne. He covers the night with the day, seeking it rapidly, and [He created] the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to His command. Surely, His is the creation and commandment. Blessed be Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!"[27]

- Belief in Allaah also includes believing in His beautiful Names and lofty Attributes. They are mentioned in His Great Book and have been affirmed by His trustworthy Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. [We believe in these Names and Attributes] without tahreef (distorting the wording or the meaning), ta'teel (divesting or denying the attributes),[28] takyeef (asking how) or tamtheel (resembling Allaah to His creation). Rather it is obligatory to leave them as they came without enquiring into the nature of [His Attributes] or how they are, while believing in the meaning that they carry. These are descriptions of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, and it is obligatory to describe Him with them in a way that befits Him without resembling Him to His creation in any of His Attributes.

Allaah the Most High says,

"There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer." [29]

"And do not put forward any similitude for Allaah. Indeed, Allaah Knows and you do not know!"[30]

This is the 'Aqeedah of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah[31] from the companions of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and those who follow them in goodness. This is what has also been quoted by Imaam Abul-Hasan al-Ash'aree (d. 324H), rahimahullaah, in his book: "Al-Maqaalaat 'an As-haabil-Hadeeth wa Ahl-is-Sunnah". Many others from the People of Knowledge and eemaan have also stated this.

Imaam al-Awzaa'ee[32] (d. 157H), rahimahullaah, said, "Az-Zuhree (d. 124H) and Makhool were asked about the Aayaat regarding the Attributes of Allaah and they replied, 'Leave them as they are.'"[33]

Al-Waleed ibn Muslim, rahimahullaah, said, "Maalik[34] (d. 179H), al-Awzaa'ee, Layth ibn Sa'ad (d. 175H) and Sufyaan ath-Thawree (d. 167H), rahimahumullaah, were asked about the reports concerning the Attributes [of Allaah] and they all replied, 'Leave them as they are without asking how.'"[35]

Al-Awzaa'ee, rahimahullaah, said, "We would say while the Taabi'oon[36] were many, 'Indeed Allaah, the Most Perfect, is above His Throne and we have eemaan in what is related in the Sunnah concerning the Attributes [of Allaah].'"[37]

The Shaykh of Imaam Maalik, Rabee'ah ibn Abee 'Abdir-Rahmaan [38] (d. 136H), rahimahullaah said, "Al-Istiwaa` [39] (Allaah's ascending) is not unknown, and how is incomprehensible. From Allaah is the Message, upon the Messenger is to clearly convey it, and upon us is to affirm it!" [40]

Imaam Maalik[41] (d. 179H), rahimahullaah, was asked about [how Allaah made] al-Istiwaa` to which he replied, "Al-Istiwaa` is known and how is unknown, to have faith in it is

obligatory and to question [how] is an innovation." Then he said to the questioner, "I do not think except that you are an evil man!" So he ordered him to be expelled. [42]

This has also been related from Ummul-Mu`mineen, [43] Umm Salamah, may Allaah be pleased with her. [44]

'Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak [45] (d. 181H), rahimahullaah, said, "We know that our Lord, the Most Perfect, is above the heavens, above His 'Arsh (Throne), separate from His creation." [46]

Indeed, there are many statements of the Scholars [47] about this matter and it is not possible to relate them all in such a short space. However, whosoever further desires to be acquainted with these narrations then let him turn to the books of the Scholars of the Sunnah concerning this subject, such as: Kitaab-us-Sunnah by 'Abdullaah the son of Imaam Ahmad (d. 290H), Kitaab-ut-Tawheed by the Great Imaam, Muhammad ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311H), Kitaab-us-Sunnah by Abul-Qaasim al-Laalikaa`ee (d. 414) and Kitaab-us-Sunnah by Aboo Bakr ibn Abee 'Aasim (d. 278H).

Refer also to the reply given by Shaykh-ul-Islaam ibn Taymeeyah (d. 728H) to the people of Hamah (entitled al-'Aqeedat-ul-Hamaweeyah) as it is a great reply, full of benefit. In it he, rahimahullaah, has made clear the 'Aqeedah of Ahl-us-Sunnah showing therein the futility of those who oppose them.

Likewise, refer to his book entitled al-'Aqeedat-ut-Tadmureeyah in which he established and explained the 'Aqeedah of Ahl-us-Sunnah with both proofs from the texts [i.e. the sources of the Religion] and proofs from sound reasoning. In this treatise he has - for all those who read it with a righteous intention desiring to realise the truth - thoroughly refuted all opposition such that the truth is clarified and falsehood vanquished.

All those who oppose Ahl-us-Sunnah in their 'Aqeedah concerning Allaah's Names and Attributes have indeed fallen into opposing the textual evidences and sound reasoning and have clearly contradicted all that Allaah has affirmed or negated for Himself.

Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah affirm for Allaah the Most Perfect, what He has affirmed for Himself in His Noble Book or what has been affirmed for Him by His Messenger Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam in the authentic Sunnah. Affirming without tamtheel (resemblance) and absolving Allaah the Most Perfect from any resemblance to His creation, whilst also rejecting and being free from ta'teel (negation). By doing this they have secured themselves against falling into self-contradiction and have enacted all of the evidences [without rejecting some and accepting others]. Indeed, this is the Sunnah of Allaah concerning the one who holds fast to the truth with which Allaah sent His Messengers and is sincere in his quest for it: He makes him conform to the truth and makes its evidences clear. Allaah the Most High says,

"Nay! We hurl truth against falsehood so it destroys it; and behold, falsehood is vanquished..." [48]

"And no example or similitude do they bring except that We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation thereof..." [49]

Al-Haafidh ibn Katheer (d. 774H), rahimahullaah, in his famous explanation [of the Qur`aan] whilst commenting upon the saying of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic,

"Indeed, your Lord is He Who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days, then He Istiwaa` (Rose over) the Throne." [50]

explained this issue in a most beautiful manner. I have quoted it here in its entirety due to its great benefit:

The stances of the people concerning this issue are many. However, this is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion about it. Indeed, the path we traverse in this issue is to follow the way of the Salaf-us-Saalih (the Pious Predecessors) such as Maalik, al-Awzaa'ee, ath-Thawree, Layth ibn Sa'ad, ash-Shaafi'ee, Ahmad, Ishaaq ibn Raahaawayah and others from the Scholars of the Muslims, both past and present. Their way is to leave them [the Attributes of Allaah] as they are without takyeef (asking how), tashbeeh (resembling them to the attributes of the creation), or ta'teel (denying their wording or meaning). Indeed, Allaah does not resemble anything of His creation in any way,

"There is nothing like Him, He is all-Hearing, all-Seeing." [51]

Rather, the matter is as the Scholars such as Nu'aym ibn Hammaad al-Khuzaa'ee (d. 228H), the Shaykh of al-Bukhaaree said, "Whosoever makes tashbeeh (resemblance) of Allaah to His creation has committed kufr (disbelief) and whoever denies what Allaah has described Himself with has also committed kufr. Indeed, there is no tashbeeh at all in that which Allaah has described Himself with, or what His Messenger has described Him with." [52] *Whoever affirms for Allaah the Most High, what is related in the clear Aayaat and the authentic narrations in a way that befits Allaah's Greatness and Majesty, whilst also denying and negating from Allaah the Most High any defects and imperfections; then such a person has truly traversed the path of Guidance."*[53]

Eemaan in the Angels

- Belief in the Angels is realised in a general and a specific sense.

The general sense of this belief is realised when the Muslim believes that Allaah has Angels who He created to obey Him. He describes them as being revered slaves who give His Word sole precedence and do whatever He Commands.

"He knows what is before them and what is behind them, they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased. They stand in awe for fear of Him." [54]

The Angels are of many different varieties. Some of them are responsible for carrying the Throne, some guard the Paradise and the Hell-Fire and some of them are responsible for writing down people's actions.

- As for the specific sense of belief in the Angels, then we believe in those Angels who have been mentioned by name by Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. These include Jibreel, Meekaa`eel, Maalik the guardian of the Hell-Fire and Israafeel, the one responsible for blowing the trumpet.

- [We also believe] in that which has been established in the authentic narration of 'Aa`ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, wherein the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, "The Angels were created from light, the Jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire and Aadam was created from that which has been described to you [by Allaah in the Qur`aan.] [55]" Reported by Muslim in his Saheeh.

Eemaan in the Books

- It is obligatory to have a general belief that Allaah, the One free from defect, sent down Books to His Prophets and Messengers in order that they may explain and clarify His Right and to call to Him. He, the Most High, says,

"Indeed, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and revealing with them the Book and the Balance (justice) that mankind may stand forth in justice." [56]

"Mankind were one community and Allaah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them he sent the Book in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed." [57]

- Specifically, we believe in those Books which Allaah has mentioned by name, including the Tawrah, the Injeel, the Zaboor and the Qur`aan.

- The Noble Qur`aan is the best and last of the Books. It is the Muhaymin [58] of the other books and testifies to the truth that remains within them. It is obligatory upon everyone to follow it and to judge by it along with the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah, Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. This is because Allaah, the One free from all defect, sent His Messenger Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam as a messenger to all of mankind and the jinn. He sent this Qur`aan so that it may be employed to judge between them. He made it a cure for what is in the hearts, He made it a clarification for everything and He made it guidance and a Mercy for the Believers. Allaah says,

"And We have sent down to you the Book [Qur`aan] as an exposition of everything and as guidance and a mercy, and glad tidings are for those who have surrendered [to Allaah, as Muslims]." [59]

"Say [O Muhammad]: O Mankind! Verily I am Allaah's Messenger to you all - to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, there is none Who has the right to be worshipped except He, and it is He that gives life and causes death. So believe in Allaah and His Messenger [Muhammad], the Prophet who can neither read nor write, who believes in Allaah and His Words [this Qur`aan]; follow him so that you may be guided." [60]

There are many verses carrying this meaning.

Eemaan in the Messengers

- It is obligatory to believe in the Messengers generally, and specifically.

So we believe that Allaah, the One free from defect, sent Messengers to His slaves. They were sent to give glad tidings, to warn and to call to the Truth. Whoever responds to them will achieve happiness and whoever opposes them will remain in failure and regret.

The last and best of the Messengers is our Messenger, Muhammad the son of 'Abdullaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. Allaah says,

"And verily We have sent amongst every nation and Messenger [saying]: Worship Allaah [Alone] and avoid all false deities." [61]
"Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allaah after the Messengers." [62]

Specifically we believe in those Prophets and Messengers whom Allaah or His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam mentioned by name including Nooh, Hood, Saalih and Ibraaheem, may Allaah's Peace and Blessings be upon all of them.

Eemaan in the Last Day

- Believing in the Last Day encompasses believing in all that Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam have stated concerning it. This includes what will happen after death such as the trial of the grave, its punishment and its blessings; what will happen on the Day of Judgement including the trials, the hardships, the Bridge, the Balance, the Account, the recompense and the distribution of the books [63] amongst the people. Some will be receiving their book with their right hands, and others receiving their book in their left hands or behind their backs.

- Belief [in the Last Day] includes: The belief in the fountain (hawd) - the drinking place of our Prophet Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. The belief in the Paradise and the Hell-Fire. The believers seeing their Lord and His Speaking to them and other aspects and events revealed in the Noble Qur`aan and the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

It is obligatory to believe in all of this and to affirm it as being true exactly as has been narrated to us by Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Eemaan in Predestination

Belief in Predestination consists of four matters:

- Firstly, that Allaah knows all that has happened and all that will happen. He knows the conditions of His slaves. He knows their sustenance, their appointed times of death, their [good and bad] deeds and everything else to do with them. Nothing is hidden from Him as He the Most High says,

"Indeed, Allaah has knowledge of all things." [64]

"That you may know that Allaah has power over all things and that Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in [His] knowledge." [65]

- Secondly, to believe that Allaah has written everything that He has Predestined or Preordained. [66] Allaah says,

"We know that which the earth takes of them [their dead bodies], and with Us is a record that contains [everything]." [67]

"And all things We have counted up [as a record] in a clear Book." [68]

"Are you not aware that Allaah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is [all] in a record. Verily, that is easy for Allaah." [69]

- Thirdly, to believe that His Will is continuously being implemented. So whatever He Wills happens and whatever He does not Will does not happen. Allaah, the One free from defect says,

"Verily, Allaah does what He Wills." [70]

"Verily His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be' and it is!" [71]

"And you do not will unless Allaah Wills, the Lord of the worlds." [72]

- Fourthly, [belief in] His creating everything that exists [including actions]. There is no creator other than Him and no lord apart than Him. Allaah the Most High says,

"Allaah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian over all things." [73]

"O mankind! Remember the grace of Allaah to you! Is there any creator other than Allaah who produces for you from the sky and the earth? None has the right to be worshipped but He, how then are you turning away [from Him]?" [74]

Thus the belief in Predestination comprises of these four matters according to Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, as opposed to those from the people of innovation who reject some of these subjects.

Other Points Concerning Eemaan

- Belief in Allaah includes the belief that eemaan is comprised of statement and action. It increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. It is not allowed to declare any Muslim who commits a sin other than shirk (associating partners with Allaah) and disbelief, to be a non-believer. [Some examples of sins are] fornication, stealing, dealing with interest, consuming intoxicants, disobeying parents, and other such issues from the major sins, provided that he does not consider them to be permissible [in which case he would be a disbeliever]. Allaah the Most High says,

"Indeed, Allaah will not forgive shirk, but will forgive anything less than this." [75]

It is established from the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam from ahaadeeth mutawaatir [76] that, Allaah will take all those who have an atoms weight (or a mustard seed) of eemaan out of the Fire.

- Belief in Allaah also includes love for the sake of Allah and hate for the sake of Allaah, friendship for the sake of Allaah and enmity for the sake of Allaah. So the believer loves the other believers and has allegiance to them while he hates the non-Muslims and has enmity towards them.

At the head of the believers from this [Muslim] nation (Ummah) are the companions of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah love them and have allegiance to them. They believe that they are the best of people after the Prophets, as the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

"The best of generations is my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them."[77]

They believe that the best of them is Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq [78], then 'Umar al-Faarooq [79], then 'Uthmaan Dhun-Noorayn [80] and then 'Alee al-Murtadaa [81], may Allaah be pleased with them all. After them come the rest of the ten who were promised Paradise and then the rest of the companions of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. [Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah] remain silent about the disputes that occurred between the companions and they believe that they each sincerely strove to reach a judgement [concerning the issue]. Whoever was correct will receive two rewards and whoever was incorrect will receive one reward [for his striving].

- [Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah] love the believers amongst the family of the Messenger of Allaah. They show allegiance to them as well as the wives of the Messenger of Allaah - the Mothers of the believers - and they are pleased with them all.

- [Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah] are free from the path of the Rawaafidh [82] who show enmity towards the companions of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and revile them, who over extol the Ahl-ul-Bayt (the family of the Prophet sall

Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and raise them above the position that Allaah, the Most High, has given them. Likewise [Ahl-us-Sunnah] are free from the path of the Nawaasib [83] who harmed the Ahl-ul-Bayt by speech or by action.

- All that we have mentioned in this brief discussion concerning the correct 'Aqeedah which Allaah sent His Messenger, Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam with, is the 'Aqeedah of the saved sect, Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. The Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said about them,

"There will not cease to be a group from my [Muslim] nation upon the Truth being aided, not being harmed by those who oppose them until the command of Allaah, the One far from defect, is established."

He sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam also said,

"The Jews split into seventy-one sects, the Christians split into seventy-two sects and this [Muslim] nation will split into seventy-three sects. All of them are in the Fire except one." So his companions asked, "Who are they, oh Messenger of Allaah?" He replied, "Those who are upon what I and my companions are upon."

It is compulsory to cling to this 'Aqeedah, to be firm upon it and to warn against that which opposes it.

Those who have deviated from this 'Aqeedah and who remain on that which opposes it are of many types. From them are those who worship idols, angels, saints, the Jinn, trees, stones amongst other things. Therefore, such people have not responded to the call of the Messengers, rather they have opposed them and have gone against them just as the Quraysh and the Arab tribes at the time of our Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did. They [the pagan Arabs] would ask their idols to fulfil their needs, to cure their sick and to grant them victory over their enemies. They would go to them sacrificing to them and taking oaths by them. Then, when the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam forbade them from this and commanded them to make their worship sincerely for Allaah alone, they considered this to be strange and rejected it. They said,

"Has he made all the gods into one god? Indeed, this is a strange thing!" [84]

However, the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not cease to call them to Allaah and warn them against associating partners with Allaah (Shirk). He sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam explained to them the reality of what he was calling them to, until whomever Allaah Willed to be guided was guided. Then after that, people entered the religion of Allaah in huge numbers. Hence the religion of Allaah was made triumphant over all other religions after the persistent calling and the long and arduous struggle of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and his companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, and those who followed them in goodness.

Then [after the passing of time] the situation changed and ignorance prevailed over most of the creation to the point that most returned to the way of ignorance through their over-exalting the prophets and the pious. They would supplicate to them, ask them for aid and relief and commit other types of Shirk! They did not know the meaning of Laa ilaaha ill Allaah (nothing is worthy of worship except Allaah) while even the non-believing Arabs [at the time of the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam] knew its meaning! Allaah is the source of Help!

This Shirk continued to spread amongst the people until our time because of the predominance of ignorance. The doubts of these later people are the same as those of the former peoples [the polytheists of Makkah]. They said, [as Allaah tells us in the Qur`aan],

"These are our intercessors with Allaah" [85]

"We worship them only so that they may bring us closer to Allaah." [86]

Allaah has refuted this doubt/error and has explained that whoever worships other than Him, no matter what it may be has indeed associated partners with Him and has disbelieved! Allaah the Most High says,

"And they worship besides Allaah things that do not hurt them, nor profit them and they say: these are our intercessors with Allaah." [87]

"Say: Do you inform Allaah about that which He does not know in the heavens or on earth? Glory be to Him! And He is far above [the partners] they associate [with Him]." [88]

In these verses, Allaah is explaining that to worship other than Him, such as the prophets, the pious, or other than them, is major Shirk, even if the one who does it calls it something else. Allaah the Most High says,

"And those who take protecting friends beside Him [say]: We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allaah." [89]

"Verily! Allaah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly Allaah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever." [90]

Allaah the Most High explains in these verses, that their worship of other than Him through their supplication [to them], their fear [of them], their hope [in them] and other such things is disbelief in Allaah, the One far from defect. Indeed, He declared them to be liars in their saying that these things they worship bring them closer to Allaah.

- From those creeds of unbelief in oppostion to the correct 'Aqeedah and that which the Messengers came with are:

What is believed by the atheists of this era from amongst the followers of Marx, Lenin and other than of them who call to atheism and disbelief. This is regardless of whether they label it socialism, communism, ba`thism or other such names. For indeed, these foundations are all the same. From their principles are that there is no god and that life is only material. And from their principles: the rejection of the Resurrection, Paradise and Hell-Fire and in fact to disbelief in all the religions. Whosoever looks into their books and studies what they are upon will come to know with certainty that this belief is in opposition to all the revealed religions [in their original form] and leads its adherents to the worst of punishments in this life and the Hereafter.

- From the 'Aqeedah that opposes the true belief is that which some Baatineeyah and Soofees believe: they believe that some of those whom they call Awliyaa` have a share in regulating and controlling the affairs of the world with Allaah. They call them al-Aqtaab, al-Awtaad, and al-Aghwaath amongst other names, all of which they have invented for their gods! This is the vilest form of Shirk in the Lordship of Allaah and it is more evil than the Shirk of before the advent of Islaam! This is because these people [the non-believing Arabs] did not commit Shirk in Allaah's Lordship but rather they committed Shirk in regards to their worship. Furthermore, they committed this type of Shirk only in times of ease. When they were in times of distress and hardship, they would make their worship sincerely for Allaah alone. Allaah says,

"And when they embark on the ships, they invoke Allaah, making their faith pure for Him only. But when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others!" [91]

As for Lordship, then they used to acknowledge that this is for Allaah Alone, as He, the One free from defect says,

"And when you ask them who created them, they will surely say Allaah." [92]

"Say: Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who rules and regulates all affairs? They will say Allaah. Say: Will you not then be afraid (about setting up rivals in worship with Allaah)?" [93]

There are many Aayaat with this meaning.

As for those who commit Shirk from amongst the later people, then these have exceeded the earlier ones from two perspectives:

Firstly, some of them have committed Shirk in Lordship.

Secondly, they commit Shirk in times of distress as well! One who lives amongst them, examines their affairs, and sees what they do at the graves of Husayn and Badawee and others in Egypt knows this. Of what they do at the graves of Aeedroos in Eden, of Haadee in Yemen, of Ibn 'Arabee in Syria, of the Shaykh 'Abdul-Qaadir al-Jilaani in Iraq, and at other famous graves. In all such places the general masses have gone to extremes and have directed many of the rights of Allaah towards them. It is rare to find one who forbids them from what they are doing and explains to them the reality of the Tawheed [94] (worshipping Allaah alone in all respects) that Allaah sent his Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam those prophets who came before him with. To Allaah we belong and to Him we return!

We ask Allaah to return them to guidance and to increase the callers to guidance amongst them. [We ask Him also] to grant the ability to the leaders of the Muslims and the scholars to combat this Shirk. Indeed, He is the One Who Hears and is close.

From those beliefs that oppose the correct creed in the issue pertaining to Allaah's Names and Attributes are the beliefs of the innovators such as the Jahmeeyah, the Mu'tazilah and those who traverse their path in negating the Attributes of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, divesting Him of the Attributes of perfection, describing Him with attributes of non-existence (ma'doom), [95] inanimacy (jamaad) and absurdity (mustaheel) - Exalted is Allaah, High above what they say about Him!

Included amongst these people are those who negate some of Allaah's Attributes whilst affirming others, such as the Asharees. Indeed, the same implications hold for those Attributes that they affirm as it does for those that they flee from and negate by figuratively explaining (ta'weel) the evidences for them.

In doing so they oppose [both] the textual and intellectual proofs, as well as fall into clear self-contradiction. [96]

As for Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, they affirm for Allaah, the Most Perfect, those Names and Attributes that He affirmed for Himself, or those that His Messenger Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam affirmed for Him; affirming them in a complete and perfect manner. Likewise they negate for Him any resemblance to His creation, whilst [at the same time] absolving themselves from denying or divesting (ta'teel) Him of His Attributes. In doing so

they act upon all of the proofs, without comitting tahreef (distortion) or ta'teel, as well as remaining free from the contradictions that others have fallen into; as has been previously explained.

This is the path of salvation and [the path of] happiness in this life and the Hereafter. This is the Straight Path that was traversed by the Salaf [97] of this Ummah (nation), as well as their Imaams.

Indeed, the latter part of this nation will not be rectified except by that which rectified the former of them; and that is none other than following the Book and the Sunnah and abandoning all that opposes them.

Appendix 1: Allaah's Names and Attributes - by Abu Rumaysah

One of the key issues that divides Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah from all other sects amongst the Muslims, is their belief in Allaah and their knowledge of Him, His Actions and His Attributes. Their way is clearly distinct from the way of the Khawaarij, the Shee'ah, the Mu'tazilah, the Jahmeeyah, the later Asharees and other sects. Know that one of the main purposes of Allaah sending down His Revelation is so that mankind may come to know their Lord. Through this knowledge they can worship Him as He deserves to be worshipped. He made it a duty upon the Prophet Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam to convey this revelation and knowledge clearly. He sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was ordered to explain it in such a way that no doubt would remain in the hearts of the people, and such that the Way to Allaah would become clear for both the learned and the ignorant. Ibn Abil-Izz says,

"Allaah says, 'The Messengers duty is only to convey.' [98]

'Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey the Message clearly?' [99]

'And We did not send a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make [the Message] clear for them. Then Allaah misleads whom He Wills [due to their own sins] and guides whom He Wills.' [100]

'And there has come to you a Light and a Clear Book from Allaah.' [101]

The command to have faith in Allaah and the Last Day was either explained by the Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam or it was not. The second possibility is obviously rejected. If he were to speak about the truth in a general manner that was open to interpretation, then he would not have conveyed the message clearly. Thus, the one who claims that he did not convey the message clearly with respect to the foundations of the religion (Usool ud-Deen) has lied against the Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam." [102]

As for those who claim that it is necessary to figuratively explain (ta'weel) Allaah's Attributes, admit that the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and his Companions never did so [as admitted by a group of the Asharees]. They have thereby, knowingly or unknowingly, claimed that the Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not convey his message clearly! Subhaanallaah! Consider this: The Asharees and their like have written volumes of works concerning the necessity of figuratively explaining [Allaah's Attributes] (ta'weel), claiming that taking the Attributes of Allaah upon their face value is tashbeeh (likening Allaah to His creation) and tajseem (to attribute to Allaah a body) - in other words clear kufr (disbelief)! Nowhere in the Qur`aan does Allaah say, "Everything that We have described Ourselves with cannot be taken upon face value because it is kufr!" The Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam never followed up his describing Allaah by warning about taking it upon its face value. Are Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam guilty of conveying the Message obscurely?!

Imaam 'Alee bin al-Murtadaa al-Yamaanee (d. 840H) said,

"The second matter is, accusing the religion of deficiency by rejecting the texts and dhawaahir (literal meanings of the Attributes), replacing their real and literal meanings with metaphorical meanings without clear and unequivocal proofs. Such proof would allow such metaphorical interpretations, however, they have only the blind following of some people of theological rhetoric (Ahl al-Kalaam) in principles that even they have not agreed upon. The vilest of these accusations is the way of the Qaraamitah and the Baatineeyah in their metaphorical interpretation of the Beautiful Names of Allaah, their negation of them in trying to absolve Allaah of anthropomorphism thereby actualising tawheed [in their eyes], and their claim that applying them [to Allaah] is tashbeeh, to the extent that they went on to say that He does not exist and neither is He non-existent...

From the necessary matters [of this Religion] is to take the Beautiful Names of Allaah mentioned in His Book by way of glorification and supreme praise of Him. Do you not see that ar-Rahmaan [103] and ar-Raheem [104], for example, are recited in every prayer and are mentioned in every Muslim gathering, all of them being agreed that these two Names are the best ways of praising Allaah the Exalted, and drawing close to Him by glorifying Him by them...

What is to prevent one from affirming the Attribute of Mercy (Rahmah) and it's like as has been affirmed by Allaah and His Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam in the same way, along with negating the deficiencies that are associated with the attributes of the creation. And doing the same with every Attribute that the Lord is described with and with which the creation is also described? For He, the Magnificent and Exalted, is described by them in the most Perfect way, removed from all defects. They describe the servant as befits him, with his defects and weaknesses. In this way Ahl-us-Sunnah understood the negation of resembling [Allaah to His creation] without negating the Attributes as is done by those who deny them.

From among the points that indicate the futility of figuratively explaining [the Attributes of Allaah], is that the Mu'tazilah dislike the explanation that the Asharees make of al-Hakeem [105], and the Asharees dislike the explanation that some of the Mu'tazilah make of the Attributes: as-Samee' [106], al-Baseer [107], and Ahl-us Sunnah dislike the [incorrect] interpretation that both parties make of all of these Names of Allaah - and all the parties dislike the explanation of the Qaraamitah! Accordingly it is obligatory to affirm what Allaah affirmed for His Noble Self without explaining and denying!

As for the saying that [affirming the] literal meaning of these Names is disbelief and misguidance, and that the Companions and the righteous salaf did not understand their meanings, or that if they did understand them they did not carry out the obligation of advising mankind of their true meaning, then it is not permissible due to two matters:

1. The necessary and unequivocal reasoning that the nature [of man] necessitates that any matter of this kind would have had a warning against it from the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and his Companions, and such a warning would have been more frequent and greater than their warning about the Lying Dajjaal. [108] It is not possible due to their complete intellects and religion that they would have left their children, women and the general masses listening to something related to Allaah, whose literal meaning is disbelief, and then remain silent about it! Were they to leave this warning, then they would certainly have left the warning against the Dajjaal, because the nullification of Allaah's Lordship is greater and more severe according to sound reasoning. Do you not see that when the people of theological rhetoric (Mutakallimeen) came to believe in the repugnance of taking the literal meanings of these texts their warning against them became frequent, as did their [futile] explanations of them? They wrote volumes concerning this, aroused the negligent, taught the ignorant, declared the disbelief of those who opposed them, and they made it wide spread amongst the Muslims, rather the whole world! But this would have been more rightfully the duty of the Master of the Messengers, the precedent of the Predecessors and the helpers of the Religion sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam if this were true.

2. It is established that any addition in the Religion is forbidden. Therefore, it is not correct that the Sharee'ah remain silent about something that is required from a text which is from the fundamentals of the Religion. Islaam is to be followed and not to be innovated in, and this is why it declares anyone who rejects any of the pillars of the Religion to be a unbeliever, because they [the pillars] are to be known by necessity. Therefore, it is more deserving and proper that the Sharee'ah does not come with something which is repeatedly recited and [apparently] false, and yet not caution us about it - especially since what is heard is false and is well-known in all of the Books of Allaah. Consequently there is nothing that occurs that would oppose [the literal meanings of the texts] by way of the Sharee'ah or intellect and would necessitate a figurative interpretation...

Ar-Raazee acknowledged in his book al-Arba'een - and he is from the greatest opponents of Ahl-us-Sunnah - that all of the Heavenly Books came with the mention of Allaah's Attributes and Allaah did not mention a single text that He is to be absolved of the Attribute of Mercy, Forbearance, Wisdom and their likes. Hence the matter is clear even though he may not accept it!"[109]

Appendix 2: The position of the Salaf concerning the Attributes of Allaah - by Abu Rumaysah

[i] Al-Awzaa'ee (d. 157H) said: I asked az-Zuhree (d. 124H) and Makhool about the verses pertaining to the Attributes, so they said,

"Leave them as they came!"[110]

[ii] Al-Waleed ibn Muslim said: I asked Maalik (d. 179H), al-Awzaa'ee, Layth ibn Sa'ad (d. 175H) and Sufyaan ath-Thawree (d. 167H) about the reports concerning the Attributes, so they all said,

"Leave them as the came, without asking how!"[111]

Imaam adh-Dhahabee (d. 748H), rahimahullaah, said,

I say: Maalik in his time was the Imaam of the people of al-Madeenah, ath-Thawree was the Imaam of Koofah, al-Awzaa'ee was the Imaam of the people of Damascus, and Layth was the Imaam of the people of Egypt; and they were from the senior (kibaar) Atbaa'ut-Taabi'oon. And this report is a consensus (ijmaa') upon this, with the absence of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan [Ash-Shaybaanee] (d. 189H) the scholar (faqeeh) of Iraq."[112]

[iii] Rabee'ah ibn Abee 'Abdir-Rahmaan (d. 136H), the Shaykh of Imaam Maalik, said,

"Istiwaa` is not unknown, how is incomprehensible, from Allaah is the Message, upon the Messenger is to convey it, and upon us is to accept it."[113]

[iv] Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah (d. 198H), rahimahullaah, said,

"Everything that Allaah described Himself with in His Book, then its recitation is its explanation without asking how or resembling."[114]

[v] Imaam Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ash-Shaybaanee (d. 189H), rahimahullaah, said,

"The Scholars from the east and the west are all united upon having faith in the Qur`aan and in the ahaadeeth that are related by the precise, reliable narrators (thiqaat) from Allaah's Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, concerning the Allaah's Attributes, without explanation or resemblance. Whoever explains anything from them this day, has left that which the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was upon and has split from the Jamaa'ah. For they neither described nor explained, but rather they gave verdicts with what was in the Book and the Sunnah, then remained silent. Whoever speaks with the view of Jahm [ibn Safwaan] has split from the Jamaa'ah, because he described Him with attributes that are nothing."[115]

Ibn Taymeeyah (d. 728H) said in Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/50), "Muhammad ibn al-Hasan learnt from Aboo Haneefah (d. 150H), Maalik, and [other] scholars of their level. He related a consensus (ijmaa') and informed that the Jahmeeyah continuously, or preponderantly describe [Allaah] with matters of negativity. As for his saying: 'without explanation', then what is intended by this is the explanation of the Jahmeeyah; those who innovated an explanation concerning the Attributes, which was in opposition to that which the Companions and their followers were firmly established upon." [vi] Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 214H), rahimahullaah, said about the hadeeth of Allaah's Descending (Nuzool),

"We have faith in it and we affirm it, without asking how, without explaining it, nor do we reject anything from it."[116]

Ibn al-'Uthaymeen said, "The explanation that Imaam Ahmad negated in his statement was the explanation that was forwarded by the people of ta'teel (denyal) from the Jahmeeyah and others. They turned the texts of the Book and the Sunnah away from their literal (dhaahir) meanings to one that opposes this." [117] [vii] Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee (d. 204H) rahimahullaah said, "To Allaah belong Names and Attributes that occur in His Book and His Prophet related to the nation. It is not possible for anyone to refute (radd) them. So the one who contradicts this after the evidence has been established against him then he is a kaafir (non-Believer), and as for before the establishment of the proof then he is excused due to ignorance, because the knowledge of that cannot be attained through the intellect. So we affirm these Attributes and we negate tashbeeh (likening Allaah to creation) as Allaah negated it by saying,

'there is nothing like Him'" [118]

He also said,

"The belief that I am upon, and I saw our Companions, the Ashaabul Hadeeth - like Maalik and Sufyaan and others - to be upon is: affirming the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah. And that Allaah is Over His Throne, above His Heaven ('alaa 'Arshihi fee Samaa`ihi), He comes close to His Creation howsoever He Wills, and He Descends to the lowest heaven howsoever He Wills." [119]

[viii] Nu'aym ibn Hammaad, the Shaykh of al-Bukhaaree, said,

"Whoever resembles Allaah to His creation has committed kufr (unbelief). Whoever denies what Allaah has described Himself with has [also] committed unbelief. Whatever He has described Himself with, or His Messenger [described Him with], then there is no tashbeeh (resemblance) in it."[120]

[ix] Ishaaq bin Raahawayah rahimahullaah said,

"Indeed Allaah has described Himself in His Book with Attributes from which the creation is left in no need to describe Him with, other than what He described Himself with. From amongst them, 'Allaah will Come to them in the shade of clouds' and His saying, 'And you see the angels around the Throne, hymning the praises of their Lord'."[121]

[x] Imaam at-Tirmidhee (d. 274H), rahimahullaah, said,

"It has been stated by more than one person from the people of knowledge regarding this hadeeth, and about the likes of it from the narrations concerning the Attributes, and that Allaah, the Most Blessed, the Most High, Descends to the lowest heaven of this world every night. They said: Affirm the narrations concerning them; have faith (eemaan) in them; do not imagine them (laa yatawahhamu); nor ask how they are (wa laa yuqaalu kayf). The likes of this has been reported from Maalik ibn Anas, Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah and 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak. They said concerning these ahaadeeth, 'Leave them as they are, without asking how they are (amirroohaa bilaa kayf).' This is the saying of the people of knowledge from Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. As for the Jahmeeyah, then they reject these narrations and say that this is resemblance (tashbeeh). However, Allaah the Most High has mentioned in various places in His Book [His Attribute of] Hand (Al-Yad); Hearing (As-Sam') and Seeing (Al-Basr), but the Jahmeeyah give a figurative interpretation (ta'weel) to these verses and explain it in a manner other than how it is explained by the people of knowledge. They say: Indeed, Allaah did not create Aadam with His Hand. They say: Indeed, the Hand [of Allaah] actually means His Power! Ishaaq ibn Ibraaheem said: Resemblance (tashbeeh) is when someone says the Hand [of Allaah] is like my hand, or His Hearing is like my hearing. So if someone says this, then this is resemblance. But if someone says what Allaah says, Hand,

Hearing, Seeing; and he does not ask how these [Attributes] are, nor does he say that Allaah's Hearing is like my hearing, then this is not resemblance. Rather, it just like what Allaah the Most Blessed, the Most High, said in His Book,
'There is none like Him; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.'" [122,123]

[xi] Aboo Ja'far at-Tirmidhee (d. 295H), when asked as to how Allaah keeps His Attribute of being above the creation if He Descends to the Lowest Heaven in the last third of the night, replied,

"The Nuzool (Descent of Allaah) is understood, but the how / nature is unknown, and faith in it is obligatory, and to question about [how] it is an innovation (bid'ah)."[124]

[xii] Adh-Dhahabee says in his Arba'een fee Sifaat Allaah,

"It would be beyond ones ability to mention every Imaam who has words concerning the affirmation of Allaah's Attributes. If the opponent is not guided by those whom we mentioned saying there is a consensus upon affirming them without ta'weel (figurative interpretation), or he does not believe him in his quote, then Allaah will not guide such a person. By Allaah, there is no good in the one who rejects the likes of az-Zuhree, Makhool, al-Awzaa'ee, ath-Thawree, Layth bin Sa'ad, Maalik, ibn 'Uyaynah, ibn al-Mubaarak, Muhammad bin al-Hasan, ash-Shaafi'ee, al-Humaydee, Aboo 'Ubayd, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Aboo 'Eesaa at-Tirmidhee, ibn Surayj, ibn Jareer at-Tabaree, ibn Khuzaymah, Zakareeyah as-Saajee, Abul-Hasan al-Ash'aree. Or rejects saying the likes of their saying in acknowledging the consensus on this like al-Khattaabee, Aboo Bakr al-Ismaa'eelee, 'Abul-Qaasim at-Tabaraanee, Aboo Ahmad al-Aasaal....and 'Abdul Qaadir al-Jilaanee..."

Let us carefully consider the above narrations. Ibn Taymeeyah says,

"So the saying of Rabee'ah and Maalik 'Istiwaa` is not unknown, how is incomprehensible, and faith in it is obligatory' agrees with the saying of the rest, 'Leave them as they are, without asking how'. For all they did was to negate knowledge of the kayfeeyah (how the Divine Attributes are), but did not negate the reality of the Attribute. Therefore, if the people had merely believed in its wording, without understanding its meaning - in a way befitting to Allaah - then why did they say, 'Istiwaa is not unknown, and how is incomprehensible.' And why did they say, 'Leave them as they came, without asking how.' Indeed, in this case Istiwaa` would not be known, rather it would be unknown; just like the Mu'jam letters [those compound letters that occur at the beginning of certain chapters of the Qur`aan; such as: Alif-Laam-Meem, etc]. So there would be no need to negate knowledge of the kayfeeyah (how the Attributes are) if the meaning of the word was not understood. It would only be necessary to negate knowledge of the kayfeeyah if the [meanings of the] Attribute have been affirmed..."[125]

Also their saying 'they left them as they are' necessitates that [what the Attributes] indicated would remain as it were, and they came as words indicating a meaning, so if what they indicated was also to be negated then it would have been necessary to say, 'they left the words [as they are] with the belief that the meaning was not known'..." [126]

So upon considering the above it becomes clear that if the Salaf had not understood the meaning of the Attributes, rather relegated the meanings to Allaah and just affirmed the wording (tafweedh al-ma'naa) their would have been no conceivable need to negate the kayfeeyah of the Attributes! Likewise the meaning of 'reciting them is their explanation' is that the clear meaning of what we recite is to be taken, and there is no need to delve into figurative explanation (ta'weel) or look for hidden and metaphorical meanings etc.

This understanding has also been endorsed by the great Shaafi'ee Imaam, al-Khattaabee (d. 388H) when he said,

"The madhhab (way) of the scholars of the Salaf and their legal jurists was to leave the likes of these ahaadeeth [concerning the Attributes] upon their literal (dhaahir) meanings, not to twist their meanings (laa yureeghu lahaa al-Ma'aanee) and neither to figuratively explain (ta'weel) them due to their knowledge that their limited knowledge was incapable of understanding them.

Az-Za'faraanee reported from us from ibn Abee Khaythama from 'Abdul-Wahhaab bin Najda al-Hutee from Baqya from al-Awzaa'ee who said, 'Makhool and az-Zuhree used to say: We leave these ahaadeeth as they came.' I say: this is from the knowledge that we have been ordered to believe in literally without attempting to uncover it's hidden meanings, and it belongs to a host of the mutashaabiha (verses) that Allaah has mentioned in His Book, so He said,

'He is the One Who has sent to you the Book, in it are clear and unequivocal verses, and others are mutashaabiha (allegorical or open to a number of meanings).'

So from the clear and unequivocal verses arises a true understanding [of their content] and action, and from the mutashaabiha arises faith and knowledge in their literal meanings, and we leave the knowledge of it's hidden meaning to Allaah, the Most Perfect..." [127]

Ibn Taymeeyah also says, "...as for the third group, then they are the People of Ignorance and they are many from those who ascribe themselves to the Sunnah and following the Salaf. They say: The Messenger sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not understand the meanings of what Allaah revealed to Him from the verses pertaining to the Attributes [of Allaah], and neither did Jibreel or the Foremost Predecessors understand them. They said the same thing for the ahaadeeth concerning the Attributes - that nobody knew their meaning except Allaah....so these people think that they are following the verse

"and none knows their explanation except Allaah"

....but they have not distinguished between the meaning of the words and their explanation and the explanation that Allaah Alone Knows. And they thought that the ta'weel (figurative explanation) mentioned in this verse is the ta'weel mentioned in the words of the later generations and they erred in this... and the explanation of the Attributes whose reality Allaah Alone Knows is the knowledge of the kayfeeyah which is unknown to us. [For example] the Istiwaa` is known, it's meaning is understood, and explained and translated in other languages, and this is the explanation that those firmly grounded in knowledge know, but as for the kayfeeyah (how / nature) of the Istiwaa` then this is the explanation that none but Allaah the Exalted knows." [128] So when we come to realise that the Salaf understood the meanings of the Attributes and affirmed them it becomes necessary to also know that they did so while negating four matters:

- Tashbeeh (likening Allaah to His Creation) and Tajseem (likening Allaah to a body)
- Takyeef (enquiring into the how or nature of the Attribute)
- Tahreef (distorting the meaning of the Attribute) and tagyeer (changing the meaning of the Attribute) and ta'weel (figuratively interpreting the meaning of the Attribute)
- Ta'teel (denying the Attributes)

[Consult: as-Sunnah (1/264-307) of Imaam Abdullaah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal (d.290), ash-Sharh wal Ibaanah (pp. 187-192) by ibn Battah(d. 387H), Aqeedah as-Salaf (pp. 4-7) by as-Saaboonee (d. 449H), ar-Risaalah fee Ithbaat al-Istiwaa` by al-Juwaynee (d. 438H), Sharh 'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah (pp. 162-366) by ibn Abil-Izz al-Hanafee (d. 792H), at-

Tadmureeyah by ibn Taymeeyah, Dhamm at-Ta'weel by al-Maqdisee, Aqaaweel ath-Thiqaat fee Ta'weel al-Asmaa` was Sifaat by ibn Yoosuf al-Karmee.]

Footnotes

1. [Translator's note]: 'Aqeedah: a firm and unwavering belief that is not open to any doubt with its beholder

2. [Translator's Note]: Sharee'ah: the divine code of law.

3. [Translator's note]: The Qur`aan

4. [Translator's note]: Sunnah: The commands, prohibitions, sayings, actions, and silent approvals of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

5. Soorah al-Maa`idah (5):5

6. Soorah az-Zumar (39):65

7. [Translator's note]: Eemaan can be loosely translated to mean faith, but includes more specifically the belief of the heart, the sayings of the tongue and the actions of the limbs.

8. Soorah al-Baqarah (2):177

9. Soorah al-Baqarah (2):286

10. Soorah an-Nisaa` (4):136

11. Soorah al-Hajj (22):70

12. [Translator's Note]: Ahaadeeth: plural of hadeeth. A narration attributed to the Prophet via a chain of narration (isnaad), concerning that which he commanded, prohibited, said, did and silently approved.

13. The hadeeth is taken from the two Shaykhs [Bukhaaree and Muslim] from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurayrah and the hadeeth of ibn 'Umar in Saheeh Muslim.

14. [Translator's Note]: Jinn: A creation aside from mankind, who are created from smokeless fire and have a free will as do mankind. They will be judged for their actions and comprise of Muslims and non-Muslims.

15. Soorah adh-Dhaariyaat (51):56-57

16. Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 21

17. [Translator's Note]: Imaam ibn ul-Qayyim said that the meaning of Taaghoot is "everything whose limits the servant transgresses with regards to worshipping, obeying or following". An example of worshipping would be in worshipping idols, an example of obeying would be obeying scholars in matters exceeding the limits, and an example of following would be following a leader in matters exceeding the limits. Imaam ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab defined it as "everything that is worshipped besides Allaah". - al-Qawl al-Mufeed `alaa Kitaab at-Tawheed [1/59-60] by ibn 'Uthaymeen.

18. Soorah an-Nahl (16):36

19. Soorah al-Anbiyaa` (21):25

20. Soorah al-Hood (11):1-2

21. Soorah az-Zumar (39):2-3

22. Soorah al-Israa` (17):23

23. Soorah al-Ghaafir (40): 14

24. Saheeh Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim.

25. Soorah al-Hajj (22):62

26. Soorah az-Zumar (39):62

27. Soorah al-A`raaf (7):54

28. [Translator's Note]: Whether this is by denying the wording or the meaning.

29. Soorah ash-Shoorah (42):11

30. Soorah an-Nahl (16):74

31. [Translator's Note]: Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah - The people who follow the way of the Prophet sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and unite upon it.

32. [Translator's Note]: He is 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn 'Amr al-Awzaa'ee - the Scholar, worshipper and mujaahid. Al-Haakim said, "Al-Awzaa'ee was the Imaam of the people of his time in general and he was the Imaam of the people of Shaam in particular." He died in Bayroot. Refer to at-Tadhkirah (1/178) and al-Hilyah (6/135) for his biography.

33. [Translator's Note]: Related by al-Harawee in Dhammul-Kalaam (p.18) and Sharh Usool ul-I'tiqaad (3/430) with a hasan isnaad.

34. [Translator's Note]: He is Aboo 'Abdillaah Maalik ibn Anas, the Imaam from Madeenah and one of the scholars of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee said: "When the scholars are mentioned, then Maalik is a dazzling star." Refer to Siyaar A'lam-un-Nubulaa (7/366) by adh-Dhahabee for a complete biography.

35. [Translator's Note]: Related by al-Aajuree (d. 360H) in ash-Sharee'ah (p.314), al-Bayhaqee in al-Asmaa` was-Sifaat (p.453) and also al-I'tiqaad (p.118) and the isnaad is hasan.

36. [Translator's Note]: Taabi'oon - The successors to the companions of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

37. [Translator's Note]: Related by al-Bayhaqee in al-Asmaa` was-Sifaat (p.408). The isnaad is jayyid as al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar said in Fath-ul-Baaree (13/406). Ibn Taymeeyah said that its isnaad was saheeh in al-Hamaweeyah.

38. [Translator's Note]: He is Rabee'ah ibn Abee 'Abdir-Rahmaan - better known as Rabee'at-ur-Ra`ee - one of the Taabi'oon of al-Madeenah. Al-Khateeb said: "He was a Faqeeh, a Scholar and a Haafidh in Fiqh and Hadeeth." Refer to Taareekh Baghdaad (8/420) and Hilyat-ul-Awliyaa` (3/259) for his biography.

39. [Translator's Note]: Allaah says in numerous places in the Qur`aan that He Istiwaa` (Rose over) His Throne [in a way that befits His Majesty], for example: "Indeed, your Lord is He Who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days, then He Istiwaa` (Rose over) the Throne." [Soorah al-A'raaf (7):54.]

40. [Translator's Note]: Al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (pg. 516). Ibn Taymeeyah said in al-Hamaweeyah (pg. 80), "al-Khallaal narrated it with an isnaad consisting of trustworthy and precise narrators." Al-Albaanee said that the isnaad was saheeh in Mukhtasar al-`Uluw (pg. 132).

41. See footnote no. 34.

42. [Translator's Note]: Related by al-Bayhaqee in al-Asmaa` was-Sifaat (p. 516) with the wording: "Al-Istiwaa` is not unknown. To have eemaan in it is obligatory and to question it is an innovation." Al-Albaanee said that the narration was established in Mukhtasar al-'Uluw' (p. 141). Al-Bayhaqee also relates (p.516), as does ad-Daarimee in ar-Radd 'alal-Jahmeeyah (p. 55) - with a Jayyid isnaad, as ibn Hajr says in Fath-ul-Baaree (13/406) - that Imaam Maalik said: "Ar-Rahmaan [Allaah] ascended as He Himself described, and it is not to be asked 'How?' as how is unknown."

43. [Translator's Note]: Umm-ul-Mu`mineen - Mother of the Believers. This term was used for the Prophets wives.

44. [Translator's Note]: The isnaad is da'eef. The Shaykh was correct in his using the term "ruwiya" thereby denoting that he considered the narration to be weak. Adh-Dhahabee said in al-'Uluw' (p. 82): "This saying has been preserved from a group such as Rabi'at-ur-Ra'ee, Maalik and Aboo Ja'far at-Tirmidhee. However, the narration from Umm Salamah is not authentic - since Aboo Kinaanah is not reliable and Aboo 'Ameer is not known."

45. [Translator's Note]: He is Aboo 'Abdir-Rahmaan 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak al-Marwazee, the Imaam from the Atbaa'-ut-Taabi'oon, the Haafidh, the Shaykh of Islaam, example for the people of Zuhd and a leader of the Mujaahideen. Refer to Taareekh Baghdaad (1/152) and at-Tadhkirah (1/274) for his biography.

46. [Translator's Note]: Reported by Imaam 'Abdullaah bin Ahmad in his book as-Sunnah (no. 22), ad-Daarimee in Ar-Radd 'alal-Jahmeeyah (no. 23), and al-Bukhaaree in Khalq Af'aal-ul-'Ibaad.

47. [Translator's Note]: Please note the Appendices for further statements of the scholars concerning this matter.

48. Soorah al-Anbiyaa` (21):18

49. Soorah al-Furqaan (25):33

50. Soorah al-A`raaf (7):54

51. Soorah ash-Shoorah (42):11

52. [Translator's Note]: Related by Imaam adh-Dhahabee with his Isnaad in Mukhtasar al-'Uluw (pg. 184) and al-Albaanee said that its isnaad was saheeh.

53. [Translator's Note]: Tafseer Qur`aan-il-'Adheem (2/230) of ibn Katheer.

54. Surah al-Anbiyaa (21): 28

55. [Translator's note]: For example, the saying of Allaah, "And He created man from clay like [that of] pottery" - Soorah ar-Rahmaan (55): 14

56. Soorah al-Hadeed (57):25

57. Soorah al-Baqarah (2):213

58. [Translator's note]: Trustworthy and a witness over the old Books.

59. Soorah an-Nahl (16):89

60. Soorah al-A`raaf (7):158

61. Soorah an-Nahl (16):36

62. Soorah an-Nisaa` (4):165

63. [Translator's note]: The record of each person's deeds.

64. Soorah at-Tawbah (9):115

65. Soorah at-Talaaq (65):12

66. [Translator's Note]: Arabic - Qadarahu wa Qadhaahu. Qadar (Preordainment) refers to the Ability of Allaah, His Writing, Knowing, Willing and Creating all things. Qadhaa (Predestination) refers to the precise execution and accomplishment of all things predestined. When mentioned alone Qadar includes the meaning of Qadhaa and vice-versa. 'Fate in Islaam' (pp. 9-10) of Dr. Saleh as-Saleh.

67. Soorah Qaaf (50): 4

68. Soorah Yaa Seen (36):12

69. Soorah al-Hajj (22):70

70. Soorah al-Hajj (22):18

71. Soorah Yaa Seen (36):82

72. Soorah at-Takweer (81):29

73. Soorah az-Zumar (39):62

74. Soorah Faatir (35):3

75. Soorah an-Nisaa` (4): 48

76. [Translator's Note]: Ahaadeeth that have been transmitted by such a large number of people that the narrators cannot be expected to agree upon a lie - al-Mooqizah (p. 40) by adh-Dhahabee

77. Agreed upon as regards its authenticity.

78. [Translator's Note]: The truthful one.

79. [Translator's Note]: The one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood.

80. [Translator's Note]: The possessor of the two lights (named so because he married two of the daughters of the Messenger of Allaah sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

81. [Translator's Note]: The chosen one.

82. [Translator's Note]: Rawaafidh - A group from among the shee'ah.

83. [Translator's Note]: Nawaasib - A sect who hated the family of the Prophet Muhammad sall Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

84. Soorah Saad (38): 5

85. Soorah Yoonus (10): 18

86. Soorah az-Zumar (39):3

87. Soorah Yoonus (10):18

88. Soorah Yoonus (10):18

89. Soorah az-Zumar (39):3

90. Soorah az-Zumar (39):3

91. Soorah al-'Ankaboot (29):65

92. Soorah az-Zukhruf (43):87

93. Soorah Yoonus (10):31

94. [Translator's Note]: Tawheed - Singling out Allaah in all that is particular to Him, in our knowledge of Him and in our worship of Him.

95. [Translator's Note]: Such as their saying that He, the Most High, is neither above nor below the creation.

96. [Translator's Note]: This is because they give the reason for making ta'weel (figuarative explanation) of some of the Attributes of Allaah to be the fear that the general masses might fall into tashbeeh (likening Allaah to His creation). However, this same reasoning holds true for those Attributes that they do affirm, yet upon which they do not perform ta'weel! Hence, they contradict themselves and the only permissible course is to follow the way of the Salaf as has preceded in the words of ibn Katheer.

97. [Translator's Note]: Salaf - The pious predecessors. The first three generations of Islaam and those who followed them in righteousness. We understand Islaam as they understood it, due to the saying of the Messenger of Allaah, "The best of mankind is my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them." [Saheeh al-Bukhaaree]

98. Soorah an-Noor (24):54

99. Soorah an-Nahl (16):54

100. Soorah Ibraaheem (14):4

101. Soorah al-Maa`idah (5):15

102. Sharh 'Aqeedah at-Tahaaweeyah (p. 231)

103. [Translator's Note]: Ar-Rahmaan - A Name of Allaah meaning 'the Most Merciful.'

104. [Translator's Note]: Ar-Raheem - A Name of Allaah meaning 'the Bestower of Mercy.'

105. [Translator's Note]: Al-Hakeem - A Name of Allaah meaning 'the All-Wise.'

106. [Translator's Note]: As-Samee' - A Name of Allaah meaning 'the All-Hearing.'

107. [Translator's Note]: Al-Baseer - A Name of Allaah meaning 'the All-Seeing.'

108. [Translator's Note]: All the Prophets warned against The Dajjaal.

109. Eethaar al-Haqq alaa al-Khalq (pp. 219+) of al-Yamaanee with summary, as quoted in Sharh Kitaab at-Tawheed min Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (1/86+) of Shaykh 'Adullaah al-Ghunaymaan.

110. Related by al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usool Ahl-is-Sunnah (no.735) with a hasan chain.

111. Related by al-Aajurree in ash-Sharee'ah (p.314) and al-Bayhaqee in al-Asmaa` was-Sifaat (p.453) with a saheeh chain, as Shaykh al-Albaanee stated in Mukhtasar al-'Uluw' (p.142).

112. al-Arba'een fee Sifaatillaah (180/Q.1-2)

113. Related by al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usool (no.665) and al-Bayhaqee (p.516). Ibn Taymeeyah said in al-Hamaweeyah (p.45): "Al-Khallaal reported it with a chain of narrators who are all precise and reliable (thiqaat) scholars."

114. Related by al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usool Ahl-is-Sunnah (p.736) and ad-Daaraqutnee in as-Sifaat (p.61). Its chain is saheeh as Ibn Hajr stated in Fathul-Baaree (13/501).

115. Related by al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usool Ahl-is-Sunnah (no.740). Ibn Taymeeyah said in Majmoo' Fataawaa (4/4), "It is confirmed from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan - the companion of Aboo Haneefah - that he said: [as above]."

116. Related by Ibn al-Jawzee in Manaaqib-ul-Imaam Ahmad (p.156), Ibn Qudaamah in Lum'atul-I'tiqaad (no.3) and Ibn al-Qayyim in as-Sawaa'iqul-Munazzilah (1/265).

117. Fath Rabb-il-Bariyyah (p.63)

118. Siyar A'laam an-Nubalaa (10/80). Adh-Dhahabee says, "Reported by al-Hakkaaree and others with a chain of narrators containing trustworthy narrators as in Mukhtasar al-Uluoo' (p. 177). He also said, "I say: the censure of Kalaam (theological rhetoric) and its people is common from ash-Shaafi'ee, and he was very stringent in following the narrations in the usool (foundations) and the furoo' (branches)."

119. Awn al-Ma'bood (13/41), and ibn Abu Ya'la reports it in Tabaqaat al-Hanaabilaa (1/283) with a chain of narration linked back to ash-Shaafi'ee.

120. Related by al-Laalikaa'ee in Sharh Usool Ahl-is-Sunnah (no.936). Its chain of narration is saheeh, as Shaykh al-Albaanee stated in Mukhtasar al-'Uluw' (p.184).

121. Al-Arba'een fee Sifaat Allaah (no. 144) by adh-Dhahabee.

122. Soorah ash-Shooraa (42):21

123. Sunan at-Tirmidhee (3/266-268)

124. Mukhtasar al-Uluw' (p. 231). Al-Albaanee declared the sanad saheeh. Aboo Ja'far was from the greatest scholars of his day.

125. Majmoo' Fataawaa (5/41-42)

126. al-Hamaweeyah (p.109)

127. Mu'aalim as-Sunan (4/304 - Daar al-Kutub al-'Ilmee) by al-Khattaabee under the chapter, "From the chapter concerning the Seeing (of Allaah in the Hereafter)" when he discusses the hadeeth of the Descent of Allaah.

128. al-Hamaweeyah (pp. 24+)